stated he (Smith) took the paratypical material in the same locality as the previously described species, namely, *Campethera bennettii* (Smith), 1836: Kurrichaine, *i.e.* Zeerust, western Transvaal. This finding resulted in the sinking of *C. a. smithii* (Malherbe), 1845: Marico R. western Transvaal, into the synonymy of nominate *C. abingoni*, with its type-locality adjusted to Kurrichaine, *i.e.*, Zeerust, western Transvaal, and the introduction of *C. a. constricta* Clancey, 1965: Gillitts, near Kloof, Natal, for the Natal and Zululand populations. White, *Bull. B.O.C.*, vol. lxxxvii, 4, 1967, p.61, contests the accuracy of my interpretation of the case, arguing that in his view the words (as given by Smith in the original range citation) are ambiguous and need not have a geographical connotation at all. This is not so. There is no ambiguity in the statement by Smith that his *Chrysoptilus Abingoni* occurs alongside his *Chrysoptilus Bennettii*. Furthermore, this situation does not obtain at Port Natal, *i.e.*, Durban, Natal, the putative but erroneous type-locality of *C. a. abingoni*, because in Natal south of the Tugela R. only the Golden-tailed Woodpecker *C. abingoni* is present. *C. bennettii* penetrates into the north of Zululand, reaching south only to about the Umfolozi R. From this it will be appreciated that Smith's statement on the distribution of *C. a. abingoni* cannot apply to Natal, as he could not have collected Golden-tailed and Bennett's Woodpeckers together in this region.

The mistaken belief that the type-locality of nominate *C. abingoni* should be Durban, Natal, and not Zeerust, western Transvaal, probably dates back to Malherbe, writing in 1845. Nowadays the so-called first reviser principle is seen as a panacea for many nomenclatural ills, but a person is only a first reviser when he has two or more sets of circumstances or two or more names, enumerates these in print and after due argument selects one set of circumstances or one name in preference to the other(s). The mere unquestioning use of a type-locality or name, or what have you, does not single out a person as a first reviser, and to be a first reviser one must adjudicate between two or more issues and decide in favour of one. For those who wish to invoke the first reviser principle to resolve (to their satisfaction) the present question, it would appear from a critical study of pertinent literature on *C. abingoni* that I acted as the first reviser when I published my 1965 note.

Should the International Commission on Zoological Nomenclature be petitioned to effect a ruling on this issue, they will not be called upon to resolve a nomenclatural tangle but to give validity to the erroneous reading of basic information by authors operating subsequent to the publication of the pivotal name by Smith in 1836. One may ask if the International Commision would not be exceeding its function and powers if it endeavoured to validate Durban, Natal, as the type-locality of *C. a. abingoni*.

A congenital abnormality in the bill of a Red-throated Diver

by BRYAN L. SAGE

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On 29th January, 1967, on the Westwood Marshes, Walberswick, Suffolk, I caught a Red-throated Diver *Gavia stellatus* (Pontoppidan) that exhibited an interesting bill deformity.

The bird was normal in every way except for the bill in which the lower mandible was approximately 22 millimetres shorter than the upper, that is to say it was about half as long (see photograph). This appeared to be a congenital condition as there was no indication that the lower mandible

had ever been damaged in any way. The tip of this mandible was quite blunt and perfectly rounded. Apart from being slightly oiled under one wing the bird was in perfect condition, and was seen to catch fish, so that the bill deformity appeared to have no detrimental effect. I have not come across any previous records of bill deformities in this species.

I am not aware of any discussion on the genetics responsible for the occurrence of what may be termed "short lower bill" in birds, but Harrison & Kear (1962) report the similar condition of "short upper beak" in wildfowl embryos that had failed to hatch, and in which it was sometimes associated with acrania or meningocoele. The condition of "short upper beak" is well known in poultry and in at least one instance has been traced to a recessive gene.

References:
Harrison, Jeffery G. and Kear, Janet (1962) "Some Congenital Abnormalities in the Beaks and Skulls of Wildfowl". *Veterinary Record* 74, pp. 632–633.

Systematic notes on austral African sandgrouse

by P. A. Clancey

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Of the four species of sandgrouse occurring in the South African Sub-Region, all of which are variably polytypic, three are represented by two or more races in the area. Recent studies of the variation in these three